

Research on Rural Grassroots Governance from the Perspective of Rural Revitalization Strategy

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ABSTRACT. *The 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China proposes to implement a strategy for rural revitalization. Promote the development of rural areas in accordance with the general requirements of “prosperous industries, ecological livability, rural civilization, effective governance, and a prosperous life”. This is a continuation and sublimation of the construction of a new countryside, which can help achieve a well-off society, a nation's prosperity, and national rejuvenation, and can better guide the people's pursuit of a better life in the new era. The rural revitalization strategy is a systematic project. Effective governance at the grassroots level is the cornerstone and guarantee for rural revitalization. It can ensure that the rural revitalization strategy is implemented and provide reliable resources for the implementation of the rural revival strategy. This study takes the rural revitalization strategy as the perspective, adopts the literature research method, case study method, and in-depth interview method. Taking Nong'an County, Changchun City, Jilin Province as an example, we find that there are many challenges in rural grassroots governance. This is specifically manifested in the obsession with privileges of some government authorities, the interference of rural clan forces in rural governance, the brutality of foreign capital, and insufficient participation of the masses. These have led to aggravated conflicts of interest among governance subjects, which seriously hindered the pace of good governance in rural areas. The rural areas have a backward economy and heavy debts, insufficient public goods supply, and low social security levels. The phenomenon of “hollow village” and “three left-behind” in rural areas is serious. According to the report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the spirit of a sound rural governance system that combines autonomy, rule of law, and rule of virtue needs to be steadily advanced from several aspects: First, give play to the core role of the leadership of the village party organization, and focus on solving and eradicating rural chaos. The second is to improve relevant laws and promote the legalization of rural grassroots governance. The third is to give full play to the main role of villagers' autonomy. The fourth is to optimize the rural grassroots governance system, and promote the improvement of governance organizations and governance elites. Finally, explore the urban-rural linkage economic development model to provide economic security for rural grassroots governance.*

KEYWORDS: *Rural revitalization; Rural areas; Grassroots governance*

1. Introduction

The report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China pointed out that in accordance with the general requirements of “prosperous industries, ecological livability, rural civilization, effective governance, and a prosperous life”, the strategy of rural rejuvenation should be implemented. This is a major decision made by the Party Central Committee from the perspective of the overall cause of the Party and the state, with a view to achieving the “two hundred years” goal, and in accordance with the aspirations of hundreds of millions of farmers for a better life. This is an inevitable requirement to resolve the contradiction between the people's growing needs for a better life and imbalance and inadequate development. This is a strategic choice to promote the overall layout of the “Five in One” and coordinate the advancement of the “Four Comprehensives” strategic layout. This is also the strategic goal of implementing the socialist ideology with Chinese characteristics in the new era. Among them, “effective governance” is the strategic goal of rural revitalization, innovating the rural governance system and taking the road of good governance in rural areas is the natural path to achieve rural revitalization and effective governance.

2. Logical relationship between rural revitalization strategy and rural governance connotation

The concept of rural revitalization is very rich, including economic, social, and cultural revitalization, as well as governance system innovation and ecological civilization progress. It is a comprehensive concept of

comprehensive revitalization. The rural revitalization strategy is the first major decision to be made in the report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China. It is a major historical task to successfully build a well-off society in an all-round way and to build a modern socialist country. It is also an inevitable requirement for the common prosperity of all people.

Rural governance is to rationally allocate and produce resources such as the layout of villages and towns, ecological environment, infrastructure and public services to promote local economic and social development and improve environmental conditions. Continuously improve the material living standards and spiritual civilization of rural residents, change the “dirty and messy” rural status quo, and continuously strengthen grassroots governance. Rural governance is an important part of the national governance system, the fundamental guarantee for the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy, and the main cornerstone of the rural revitalization strategy.

The report of the Nineteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China pointed out that the strategy of revitalizing the countryside was implemented in accordance with the general requirements of “prosperous industries, ecological livability, rural civilization, effective governance, and a prosperous life”. Among them, “effective governance” is a catalyst for accelerating the advancement of rural governance systems and governance modernization and is also an important and necessary way to implement the strategy of rural revitalization. The full implementation of the rural revitalization strategy needs to accelerate the modernization of rural governance systems and capabilities.

3. Difficulties and Challenges of Rural Governance.

“Rural governance, peace for the people, stability of the country.” The report of the Nineteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China emphasized that the rural revitalization strategy should strengthen and innovate social governance and called for the modernization of rural governance systems and capabilities. Effective rural governance is imminent and faces many challenges. Under the strong call of the Party Central Committee and the correct guidance of local governments, effective rural governance is the starting point for coordinating urban and rural development and achieving long-term rural development. The rural landscape has changed dramatically. However, it should be noted that there are still many problems in rural governance, which have become a “stumbling block” on the road of rural revitalization.

3.1 Village Officials' Obsession with Privileges Erodes the Foundation of Governance.

With the increase of agricultural support projects and financial investment, for village officials, the township government is unable to supervise, and the masses are not supervising enough. In addition, the rural grassroots are at the end of the system and are subject to less constraints. This has provided space for their power to seek rent, and the phenomenon of embezzlement of people's livelihood funds and cannibalization of the masses has occurred frequently. This situation not only reduces the credibility of the party and government, damages the party and government's image of serving the people wholeheartedly, but also erodes the legitimate foundation of rural social governance.

3.2 Village Clans Interfere with Rural Governance.

Ambiguity, complexity and intermittence are typical characteristics of rural grassroots affairs. In addition, the overall quality of the village committee personnel is not high, and the sense of responsibility is not strong. Some village clan forces interfere with the governance of various rural affairs. It is mainly manifested in the following aspects. First, clan forces threaten rural grassroots government. Some village clan forces threaten grassroots political power by cohesive forces, which seriously affects rural grassroots political power and rural social governance. Second, clan forces hinder the process of rural governance. Larger clan forces manipulated the elections of village committees, disrupting and distorting normal and orderly election activities. This virtually deprives villagers of their right to vote, seriously undermines the relationship between the party and the government and the people, and severely hinders the process of rural governance. The third is the clan influence on the local civilization. The mutual exclusion among the clans has affected the spread of advanced civilization in the countryside, disrupted the social order in the countryside, and exacerbated the distrust of the villagers. This shakes the foundation of villagers' self-government and lays a deep curse on rural grassroots governance.

3.3 Low Participation of Villagers Restricts the Staying Power of Autonomy.

Whether rooted in the city to change identities or return home to start a business, most villagers put their minds and energies on individual families. The peasants' homeland sentiment has weakened, and rural public affairs are not directly related to themselves, and they ignore rural affairs and general elections. At the same time, due to the continuous acceleration of the urbanization process, the "three left-behind" personnel are now living in rural areas. Affected by age, cultural knowledge, and physical conditions, these kinds of villagers not only have no enthusiasm to actively participate in rural development and change, but also have no ability to implement management and supervision. The election activities of some village committees were flashy, villagers' self-government was embarrassed, and their self-reliance was obviously insufficient.

3.4 Economic Backwardness Restricts the Supply of Public Services.

In the macro context of the rural revitalization strategy, villagers' demands for public services such as rural infrastructure construction, public culture, education, public sports, medical care, and social security have been increasing. Public financial expenditures have lost sight of each other, the collective economy has been rendered useless, and social power donations are far from enough. This has led to the scarcity of available funds for rural grassroots governance and the contradiction between the supply and demand of rural public services.

4. Optimize the effective governance of rural grassroots.

The realization of the rural revitalization strategy needs to be based on rural governance and rely on and use policy tendencies to shape the governance atmosphere. This requires changing and eradicating ingrained governance concepts, actively addressing governance challenges, building and optimizing governance systems tailored to local conditions, and developing and innovating cost-effective governance models. It is mainly reflected in the following four aspects:

1) Strengthen the core role of grass-roots party organizations and strengthen the building of village cadres." The train runs fast, all by the headband." "The key to the development of rural areas and the prosperity of farmers lies in the party branch." Party leadership is the basic prerequisite and guarantee for strengthening social governance. The grass-roots party organizations in the rural areas are the basis of the party's overall work and combat effectiveness in the countryside, and the bridge and bond between the party and the broad masses of farmers. This organization is the most important and active force in promoting rural governance and is the backbone of rural grassroots governance. It is the key and inevitable choice for realizing the modernization of rural governance, and an important guarantee for realizing the strategy of rural revitalization.

As the saying goes, "Villages look at villages, households look at households, and the masses look at cadres." To give play to the role of rural grass-roots party organizations in rural governance, we must do a good job in building the contingent of rural cadres. The quality of rural cadres directly affects the leadership, appeal, cohesion and creativity of grass-roots party organizations, and directly determines the effectiveness of rural governance. First, in the general election of the village committee, party members and cadres with strong party spirit, high levels of prosperity, good service consciousness, and good work style should be selected as village cadres. Second, rural cadres should study and train regularly to ensure a firm socialist political direction, adhere to the arrangements and deployment of rural revitalization strategies, and maintain a high degree of consistency with the central government's political direction and political stance. Third, improve the overall image of the village cadre team, arm the mind with advanced ideas and theoretical knowledge, and take moral education as an important content of village cadre education. Fourth, establish a village-level reserve talent pool with townships and villages as the unit, effectively improve the political treatment of village cadres, and expand the space for village cadres to rise.

2) Rectify the Weakness and Slackness Village Party Organizations and Give Play to the Role of Rural Elite Governance.

"Weakness and slackness, everything is difficult." Weakness and slackness are a weakness of some rural grassroots party organizations. The reason for weakness is that the combat effectiveness is not strong. The reason for slackness is because of insufficient cohesion. In order to rectify the weak and scattered village party organizations, they must tilt to the grassroots in terms of policies, talents, funds, and projects. Build a strong leadership team of rural grass-roots party organizations, pay attention to the selection of rich rural people and young people into the reserve cadres at the village level, and promote their talents in practice by handing over tasks and burdens. Establish special funds for serving the masses and increase funding guarantees. Encourage and support rural grass-roots party organizations to use their own advantages to develop and strengthen village-level collective economies, so that party organizations have more confidence and weight in their work,

and truly become a leader who leads the masses out of poverty and prosperity.

In accordance with the country's requirements for the establishment of a rural governance system that combines autonomy, rule of law, and rule of virtue, the innovation of rural multi-governance is promoted. Effectively give play to the role of multiple governance subjects in rural rejuvenation and rural management. To achieve diversified and effective governance, the main role of rural talents must be brought into play. The knowledgeable and compassionate rural talented elites can help the spread of advanced rural civilization, ensure the harmonious order of rural society, increase the trust of villagers, consolidate the foundation of villager autonomy, and improve rural governance capabilities. Rural talents can, to a certain extent, optimize the structure of rural governance, resist the power of various clans in the countryside, eradicate the root causes of rural grassroots governance, and curb the irregular selection process of grassroots cadres. Therefore, it is necessary to actively build an effective platform for rural talents to participate in rural governance, encourage and support their participation in rural governance and the construction of rural grass-roots organizations, and achieve effective convergence and positive interaction between government governance and grass-roots autonomy. It is necessary to broaden the entrance of village governance talent selection, abandon the regional concept, and select outstanding talents across the region to enter the village cadre team. It is necessary to implement the "One village, one college student plan", continue to do a good job of sending outstanding young cadres to the countryside as the village's first secretary, explore the implementation of effective incentive measures, and urge and encourage the cadres to be more actively involved in rural governance and rural economy developing.

3) Promote the Shift of the Focus of Rural Governance and Actively Cultivate Private Autonomous Organizations.

"Things can't be done, the villagers have the final say." Villager autonomy is in a fundamental position in the rural governance system, and it plays a subjective and fundamental role. It is necessary to adhere to self-government as the basis, formulate a sound system and give full play to the unique functions of the autonomy charter and village rules and covenants in rural grassroots governance. Pay attention to the wisdom of villagers and townspeople and promote public order and good customs. Establish and improve the village affairs supervision committee in an all-round way and implement the village-level affairs sunshine project. Relying on villagers' meetings, villagers' representative meetings, villagers' councils, and villagers' supervisory boards, etc., a multi-level grass-roots consultation pattern of civil discussion, civil affairs, and civil affairs management has been formed. Promote the focus of rural governance downwards and decentralize resources, services and management to the grass-roots level as much as possible. Continue the pilot work of villager self-government with villagers' groups or natural villages as the basic unit and improve and innovate the vibrant villager self-governance mechanism led by the village party organization.

Establishing and improving an autonomous organization that can widely represent the interests of villagers can expand the path for villagers to participate in governance and provide better expression mechanisms for villagers. Therefore, it is necessary to actively cultivate rural community organizations, create a certain autonomous organization environment for them, guide them to establish and improve relevant functional institutions, improve the system of organizational operations, and promote the standardized, scientific, and efficient operation of rural civil organizations. It is necessary to improve the construction of the rural organization system, encourage rural development of various autonomous organizations including community services, economic development and cultural construction, and provide support in terms of policies, funds and talents.

4) Give Play to the Functions of Social Organizations and Diversify to Increase Farmers' Income.

Social organizations are rooted in the masses, and they can timely discover the needs of the grassroots and understand the contradictions at the grassroots level. It has the functions of "serving the society, regulating behavior, and expressing demands". At present, social organizations have an irreplaceable role in participating in the provision of public service products, meeting the diverse and multi-level needs of the masses, and resolving social contradictions in a timely manner. To this end, social organizations in urban and rural communities need to be vigorously developed. In rural governance, efforts should be made to give play to the role of social organizations in dispute mediation, healthy endowment, education and training, and public welfare and charity to enhance the sense of gain, security, and well-being of rural people. In addition, grassroots governments can also guide social organizations to participate in rural governance by purchasing public services of social organizations.

Increasing farmers' income is the core issue of the "three rural issues". Protect peasants' property according to law, explore rural collective economic organizations to revitalize peasants' idle resources by leasing, cooperation, etc., and promote the transformation of resources into assets, funds into shares, and farmers into shareholders.

Reform the use of financial support funds for agriculture, explore the transfer of assets formed by financial subsidy funds to participate in the holding and management of professional farmers' cooperatives. Make full use of the opportunities brought to agriculture by the Internet era, and through the network system to penetrate the cultivation, processing and sales of agricultural products, truly achieve the integrated development of the first, second and third industries. Organically combine agriculture with education, culture, tourism and other service industries to develop from traditional plantation agriculture to leisure agriculture, promote the development of rural economy, and cultivate emerging growth points for farmers' income.

In short, in the process of implementing the rural revitalization strategy, the focus is on long-term governance. It is necessary to give play to the basic and core role of rural grassroots party organizations. The vast number of party members and cadres in the countryside do not forget their original intentions, keep their mission in mind, strengthen their convictions, and forge ahead, which has become a strong guarantee for the revitalization of the countryside. It is necessary to tap the main role of rural talents and gradually form a governance pattern combining endogenous forces and external embedded governance. In the end, a cooperative and complementary rural governance mechanism will be formed to coordinate the implementation of the rural revitalization strategy and compose a new chapter for the comprehensive revitalization of rural in the new era.

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